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FOUR MANX PLAYS

THE CHURNING

THE LIPS OF THE SEA

THE FAERY TUNE

BY MONA DOUGLAS

YN BLAA SOOREE

BY J. J. KNEEN

DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN:
THE MANX SOCIETY.

S. K. BROADBENT & Co. LTD.,
VICTORIA STREET. DOUGLAS.

1921



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THE CHURNING:

A COMEDY OF MANX LIFE.

By MONA DOUGLAS.

Characters :

Mrs Kinrade—A Farmer's Wife.

Paaie—Her Daughter.

Mrs Quilleash—A Neighbour.

Phillie-y-Phurt—A Travelling Charmer.

SCENE : A farm kitchen in the morning—not too tidy. Crock set in tub of water and covered with cloths near fire. Paaie churning vigorously in middle of floor, and singing in time with the turning of the churn.

TIME : The present.

Paaie (singing) :

Churnal jiu as churnal jea,
As goll dy churnal mairagh :
Ta wheesh dy eem er y churn,
Cha vowym stappal gleashagh !
O trooid shiu jiu, as trooid shiu jea,
As trooid shiu ooilley mairagh—
Ta wheesh dy eem er y churn,
Cha vowym stappal gleashagh !
(Stops churn.)

I'll be putting another lil sight on it. I wonder is it ever going to come at all? Me here turning this old thing since eight o'clock, and the arms nearly broken on me—plague take it! (Looks into churn.) No—not a sign of it gathering yet. (Starts churning again.) I'm thinking there's something queer about this. The weather's not cold, goodness knows; and we don't have this bother and snow lying. And there's oceans of hot water used at me. . . I'm admiring myself, singing away about a lot of butter on the churn, and the bithag looking just the same as when I started three hours ago! Anyway, it's time some person else took a spell turning it, for I'm tired. I wonder has herself the lunch ready? (calls) Mother!

Enter Mrs Kinrade in working clothes. Coarse apron, a little wet. Skirt turned up and pinned at back. Sleeves rolled to elbow.

Mrs K. : What's thee trouble, girl? Don't thou know I'm busy? And thou should be done churning and getting the lunch ready to take out to the boys by this time—just look at that clock! Thou are litcheragh to-day.

Paaie : Litcheragh is it, you're saying?—and me turning this old stravaaguer of a thing till the arms is just broken on me, and the bithag looking just like when it was put in. I'm thinking there's more than litcheragh doing on it—butcheraght, more like, by the look of things.

Mrs K. : Here, let me take a turn of it, and don't be giving so much of thee lip. Thou were ever a kione-kiark of a one, and it's like enough thou were gone in a jarrood for half-an-hour, and the churn left easy. (Exit Paaie, pouting. Mrs K. raises her voice and calls after her :) Now hurry with the lunch, ya, and then get the pot on for the broth straight. (To herself, turning churn :) It's a strange thing though. I was hearing the churn going the whole time and me in the back kitchen; and the butter should be ready to lift this long time. I wonder, now—. There's queer ones in, no doubt. . . Best not to put a mouth on the like, though! Anyway, there'd be no harm if I was putting a little taste of the fire under, just to put heart in it, like. (Paaie has re-entered, and is busy getting lunch ready, humming a tune to herself. Pause. Enter Mrs Quilleash. Paaie and Mrs K. smile and nod in welcome.)

Mrs K. : Aw, come in, Mrs Quilleash, one ! Thou are just in time to get a piece and a cup of tea with us. We were just going to get lunch; and indeed it's myself'll not be sorry to taste a cup of the tea. The lunch is putting the morning on nice, like. I'm always looking for it about eleven.

Mrs Q. (sitting down) : Aw, thank ye, Mrs Kinrade, woman. I'll be glad enough of a cup myself. It's surprising the hot it is when you're travelling on the road. It's not long till we'll have the summer on us I'm saying. . . And how is Paaie doing? It's a fine girl she is growing, Mrs Kinrade.

Mrs K. (coming over to table, pouring out tea, putting jam on two pieces of flour cake) : Aw, she's growing quick enough. What's it they're saying?—"Ill weeds spring high." (To Paaie :) Here, girl; take this out to the boys. They should be out at the Boilrhenny.

Paaie : And is there no lunch in for me? I'm hungry dreadful.

Mrs K. : Take a piece in thy fist, then, and don't have so much to say. Thou'll get a drink when thou'll come back. (Paaie goes out carrying two basins of tea with a piece on top of each, and holding a small piece in one hand.)

Mrs K. (to Mrs Q.) : Now, help theeself, ya. (They get lunch.)

Mrs Q. : Thou are late with the churning to-day, surely? I've seen the butter all made up at thee before dinner, times.

Mrs K. (giving Mrs Q. a suspicious look, hesitating, and then drawing her chair closer and speaking confidentially) : I don't know at all what's there doing on it, Mrs Quilleash, one. Yandher churn was going round at us since eight this morning, and the bithag was lookin' the very same when I left it just now there as it was when I put it in.

Mrs Q. (very interested) : O-ho ! . . . Well,

I've heard the like before now, Mrs Kinrade, and not so very long since, neither.

Mrs K. : Paaie yonder was putting it round, and I know she wasn't leaving it easy times, for I was just in the back kitchen, and hearing it going steady all the time. The girl has a notion there's something wrong, too. But I wasn't letting her see I took notice that way at all. It's not right these young ones to be minding the like.

Mrs Q. (nodding wisely) : Aw, no. Too much they're knowing of such things. And have thou done anything? (Nodding towards churn.)

Mrs K. (hesitantly) : Well, no-o. Not yet at all. . . I wasn't rightly sure, you see. But I was thinking, maybe—there wouldn't be any harm in me putting a little piece of coal under it, would there?

Mrs Q. : No harm at all, vedn. I'd be doing the same myself if it was me.

(A loud knocking at door, accompanied by a voice calling: "Are ye in, Mistress vogh?" Steps heard coming in. Mrs K. and Mrs Q. exchange looks.)

Mrs K. : It's Phillie-y-Phurt that's in, surely. That's his voice; and I was hearing he was on the roads. (Calls.) Aw yes, Phillie. Come thee ways in, man—come right in through. (Rises, puts more water in teapot and sets out another cup.)

Mrs Q. (in a low voice) : The very man to put thee butter right for thee, Mrs Kinrade, woman!

(Enter Phillie-y-Phurt.)

Phillie : Moghrey-mie-eu, Ven-thie. And good-morning to thee, Mrs Quilleash. It's a fine day doing in, and a man to be travelling the roads. Soft, though; very soft. But good drying in for all. (Seats himself.)

Mrs K. : And how are thou finding the land, Phillie? It's a while since thou were

travelling this side. (Banteringly, to Mrs Q.) : It's finding plenty of high-up good friends in the towns of the South he is the winter, and choice food before him, it's like, and a soft bed; and it's taking a month of the sun tempting him and teasing him and shaming him for a Lob-lie-by-the-fire till he'll take to the roads again; and the spring rising in the second moon.

Phillie (unconcernedly) : You're wrong, then, Ven-thie; for it's on the roads and the bare hills I've been the most part of the winter; and it's little choice food or soft beds I have been close to, or shining fires, only when ones would be burning gorse on the hills. There's lots of good friends at me, though; high and low, rich and poor; in houses and out of them. Aw yes; lots of friends has Phillie.

Mrs Q. : I'm hearing ones saying times you are talking with the wild rabbits and the sheep on the tops. Is it true, Phillie, and is that some of your friends? It's a strange thing, surely, a man to be understanding the speech of animals and making companions of them.

Phillie : 'Deed, though, and a sheep is not bad company, and you alone in some high lonely place, and no person near you, and the mist comin' down. . . . A man is needing to be making friends with the wild things, and him travelling the country alone the year round the way I am.

Mrs K. : And it's all the talk you are knowing all the names of all the herbs, too, and what they are good for; and all the charms they are used in, and the like.

Phillie (cautiously) : Well, a good many, it's like. Not all, hardly, though. A simple thing, now—but I wouldn't chance to be trying a strange hard thing at all.

Mrs K. (hesitantly) : Are thou ever doing a charm for a friend, Phillie?

Phillie : Aw, sometimes; if I think it's any use, like. There's some are thinking

me middling to charm a sick cow or the like of that.

Mrs Q. : Yes indeed, I've often heard that. (Mrs K. and Mrs Q. exchange looks.)

Mrs K. : Would it be asking too much if I was to be telling you my butter has been overlooked, and asking you to put a little word on the churn for me?

Phillie (alertly) : Aw, no, Mrs Kinrade, not at all. I'm delighted to be of any service to an old friend like yourself. The butter is not coming right for thee, eh? Aw well, just leave me with the churn for a few minutes, and I'll warrant thou'll have no more trouble.

Mrs K. : Thankye very much, Phillie; I'm very much obliged to you. Well, we'll leave ye to it.

(Mrs K. and Mrs Q. go out. Phillie goes over to churn, looks into it and mutters to himself. Goes to fireplace and gets a piece of coal which he places under the churn, together with the steel poker and shovel, crossed. Then he takes a small bag out of his pocket and puts a pinch of the contents into the churn. Then walks round churn three times, following the course of the sun, and speaking in a sing-song voice) :

"Phillip va Ree ny Shee, as Bahee y ven echey. Yinnagh ee brearey gys Jee nagh beagh dy-bragh laceal er aeg ny shenn. Goyms spyrryd firrinnagh, as jiooldym voym yn doo spyrryd; as goyms eh, as bee eh aym, as cha bee'm dy-bragh yn drogh-spyrryd."

Then gives three turns to the churn, and calls loudly :

Come in now, Ven-thie! (The two women enter.)

Phillie : Go and churn now for thee butter, and see thou'll sweep the road to-night, and every night before thou'll churn. (He goes out. Mrs K. goes to churn and

THE CHURNING

looks in, then hold up hands in surprise.)

Mrs Q. : Is the butter there?

Mrs K. : It's coming, anyway. (Starts churning vigorously.) It'll not be long till I'll have it ready to lift. Aw, it's a wonderful man Phillie is for all—he must be thick mighty with Themselves!

Mrs Q. : Aw, did thou ever hear the like, now! Phillie-y-Phurt is the good friend to have, indeed. (Paaie's voice heard outside, singing.)

Mrs Q. (nodding towards door) : Will thou tell her?

Mrs K. : And why would I? It's too much the like of her is hearing.

(Enter Paaie.)

Paaie : I had to go right over to the Gobedn. The boys were gone from the Boolrhenny. I'm thirsty dreadful—is there any tea left? (Tries teapot and pours out a cup and drinks it greedily.) Well, is the butter gathering at all yet?

Mrs K. : Gathering, yes—gathering enough! I told thee thou were lazy, girl. Paaie looks surprised.)

Paaie : Well! I don't know what came over the old thing. My arms are tired yet with the way I was turning. I'm thinking you must have put a charm on it.

Mrs Q. : Well, I must be going. So long! (Exit.)

Mrs K. : So long! (To Paaie) : Put some bree on it you mean. Don't be talking nonsense, and go and hurry the dinner while I'm finishing it ready to make up after. (Paaie goes towards door. Mrs K. raises her voice, calling after her) : And mind thou'll not put a charm on the broth that it'll not boil for thee! Capers! (Paaie goes out gaily, tossing her head. Mrs K. churns steadily and sings) :

Churnal jiu as churnal jea,
As goll dy churnal mairagh :
Ta wheesh dy eem er y churn,
Cha vowym stappal gleashagh!
O trooid shiu jiu, as trooid shiu jea,
As trooid shiu ooilley mairagh—
Ta wheesh dy eem er y churn,
Cha vowym stappal gleashagh!

CURTAIN.

THE LIPS OF THE SEA

A PLAY IN ONE ACT, BY MONA DOUGLAS.

"Ta deiney treih, treih
'Sy baatyn goll magh :
Ta ny meillyn varrey garraghtey,
Garraghtey dy-bragh."—Old Song.

CHARACTERS :

Marget Teare.....An Old Woman.
Lailey and Nessie Her Daughters.
John MacKneale...Skipper of a Fishing-boat.

Jamsie Cannell.....Mate of the Fishing-boat.
Ffinlo-y-Clieau A Man on the Houses.
The Ramsey Priest.

SCENE : The kitchen of a house near Ramsey, about 1800 A.D.

Door to right; dresser along right wall; further back against same wall, ladder to loft. Small window containing plants, centre back; long scrubbed table and form under window. Choillagh, with a few chairs and stools about it, left. Bink and water-crock in corner by choillagh. Round table near choillagh. Nessy is baking flour cake at the round table, and Lailey is spinning, when the curtain rises.

Nessy : Herself is a long time gone, Lailey. Was she saying to you the place she was for? Will she be gone to the churchyard, no?

Lailey : Hardly, I'm thinking. The word on her mouth and her going out on the street was, she was going to get bons up the woods, for it was time to be making a store against the dark weather will be on us in a short while. Still and for all, she might have made over from the Skyall road and in on the top of the yard to put a little sight on the graves. It's like she'd be thinking there was no hurry on her at all, and the two of us in the house.

Nessy : Traa-dy-liooar still, like she was ever! And never thinking on the long dis-

tance she will have to be dragging her bart, I suppose; and her getting up in years and all—but what can you be saying to her that she will take heed to? Going, going still; and no rest on her till the time she'll be resting dy-haie under the mould, it's like. . . . Do you think is it right one of us should go over the road to meet her and take the bart from her, if she will be coming that way?

Lailey : It's getting late on the day anyway, and her not to be in. But I'm not liking that dark piece of the road where it's going in under the trees and round near Skyall very well, unless I have company. You know the talk there's going about; and it's a thick, dark evening. Hurry the cakes a little taste, and the two of us will be going.

Nessy : Maybe that will be the best thing. . . . It is a lonely road when the dim is coming on; I'm not admiring to be travelling it myself that time, alone. The trees are that queer in the shadows, and the wind kyning in on the mooiraght like it is to-day. . . . And that Skyall road coming down out of the dark wood, and no person knowing what is there on it up far. Lailey, are you ever thinking it a strange thing there is no fear on Herself, but travelling the

roads and the woods, and even up to the tops, any hour? . . . Do you think is she ever meeting anything?

Lailey: Cha 'saims dy-jarroo! It might be. But she is not fearing anything she would meet, anyway. I heard her saying to Ffinlo-y-Clieau one time that when your father and mother and your own husband and two children were left in the Yard, and two more sons tossing and sinking in the deeps of the wild sea, and the one boy that's left alive yet sailing out far in a small lugger, there was better company for you in the loneliest desert of a place than in a house and people all round you.

Nessy: It is a strange woman she is, times; and it's great sorrow and a hard life she has had, till it's no wonder if she will be knowing and seeing things we are not. Ffinlo himself has a great respect for her. And nights when the great storms are coming in, and the wind sounding loud in the trees and around the house, I am feeling her restless in the bed, and hearing her muttering of lights and the white sea and the dark tops and strange names like you never knew—out of some old song, it's like—and there's a dream seems to be on her about some lips that are laughing for ever; and sometimes our father's name comes on her mouth, and after that she is quieter.

Lailey: Whist ya! I'm hearing her on the street, I believe—so there will be no occasion for us to be going the road for all.

(Enter Marget, carrying a few loose sticks, which she puts on the choillagh.)

Nessy: We were just thinking would we come on the road to meet you, mother, and you so late back; only we weren't sure the way you would be taking. Were you over far?

Marget: Aye; far enough; and out the Skyall road, the way I wasn't able to get

home sooner. There's a middling good bart left on the street at me, though.

Lailey: Were you seeing any person on the roads?

Marget (looking at her suspiciously): Seeing—how do you know what am I seeing? (Recovering herself): Aw, yes, though. I was seeing a man coming on the Ramsey road just as I was coming in; and by the cut of him it was the Ramsey priest. Going up to Doran's the high woods he'll be, it's like; and if he is for there he will be in on us first. Be slinging the kettle on right, Nessy; and give me the bellows, that there will be a little sup for him if he will come. A decent, easy man he is, if he's not our own old Pazon; and always a good word on his mouth, and the newses of the town. . . . A knowledgeable man, too, they're saying, like these Romans are ever. (Stirs fire and blows it. Nessy clears baking materials off round table, washes it, and puts cakes away in a round wooden box under the bink. Marget croons to herself, rather indistinctly, a bar or two of an old tune, and then drops into:

Ta deiney treih, treih,

'Sy baatyn goll magh:

Ta ny meillyn varrey garraghtey,
Garraghtey dy-bragh.

(Nessy and Lailey exchange glances.)

Nessy (in a low voice): That word on her mouth still! Who could be understanding the dream is on her? "Laughing for ever, the lips of the sea"—what can it be meaning at all? Many's the time I've heard that thing at her in the deep night, and her gone far in sleep; but never rightly like this, and her waking.

Lailey: It's some old song we never heard, surely. It's like she will know plenty we don't—songs father would have coming out of the boats, and the like of that. (Listening.) There's a sort of a tune to it I never heard before, anyway. (Louder, to Marget): That's a strange song you have,

mother. We never heard it before now. What is it meaning at all? I cannot make sense of it.

Marget (evasively): Oh, it's an old song was made at a man that was took at the sea a long time ago. And here's the good man in on us—wasn't I saying he would be? Be putting a chair to the choillagh for him, Lailey.

(Enter the Ramsey priest.)

Priest: Good evening to you, Mrs Teare, and to you, girls. I thought I would step in and have a word with you—pass the newses, as you would say—on my way up to the woods. (The girls have been setting tea on the round table. Now they draw up chairs, calling Marget and the priest.)

Marget: And right, too, sir; and we're glad to see you. And now you are in you will be drinking a cup of the tea with us, for we're just for having it. And is there any big newses going in the town?

Priest: Nothing great, Mrs Teare, but a piece of good news for you. I think it was that made me call here to-day. The "Bonny Mary" is in the bay, and the skipper and mate are ashore in the town. I was talking to MacKneale, so I expect you will be having Illiam out to see you to-night or in the morning. MacKneale said he was left in charge of the ship till they went back, but after that he would be free till the next tide.

Marget (eagerly): Indeed, and it is good news you have brought, sir. Illiam is so long gone from us it will be sight on the blind to be looking on him again, if it will be only for a few hours; and the boy will be willing to be putting a sight on us, too.

Priest: Yes, I expect so. He was not very willing to sign on the "Bonny Mary" this last time, was he?

Marget: No. He was thinking very hard of joining her. But a man is often not wishful to be going with the boats and having to go for all. It's a hard life, to follow the sea. Some are feeling it lie easy

on them, and some are not; but what else is there for a man only that itself, and him to be born in this windy country in the middle of the water? It's go they must and go they will, and a dream and a fear in the heart of every one of them, and the boats going out—but the love of it for all, and that's the shadow of laughter that's on the sea ever. . . . It's like it will be morning before the boy will get home, for John MacKneale and Jamsie are not the ones to be getting back aboard early when they will come ashore. I wouldn't trust but they'll land out here themselves to-night yet.

Priest: Well, after giving you my news and enjoying your tea, I think I must be going, Mrs Teare. They will be expecting me up at Doran's before it is dark, and the days are growing so short now.

Marget: Well, sir, if you must go we'll not be for keeping you; but I'm glad you called in. Any time you are going up the woods, come in and have a little rest and a drink of tea on the way. It's a good piece out from Ramsey, and Doran's are up far in the woods.

Priest: Thank you very much, Mrs Teare. You are very kind to one of another faith than your own; and he does not forget a kindness shown, even though thanks are all he can offer in return. Well! Goodbye all. (Exit.)

Marget: A real doiagh man, if he is a Roman. And the good he is to travel on the few of his people that's in, and them all living in far, wild places, like on purpose to give him trouble, you'd think. . . . And the "Bonny Mary" is in the bay . . . and yet—

Nessy: It never rains but it pours! I can hear some person on the street again, and if it's not Ffinlo-y-Clieau's foot I'm a coar-ny-hastyn.

Lailey (listening): It's himself that's in, I believe. A good thing he's here on us

before, we put the meal off the table.

(Ffinlo comes in, carrying a fiddle under his arm and a bag on his back.)

Ffinlo: Fastyr-mie,eu Ven-thie! And may these fine girls get a fine sweetheart apiece.

Marget: Trooid stiagh, Ffinlo. Thou know there's always a welcome for thee at this choillagh while I'm in.

Ffinlo (nodding his head wisely): Aye, I'm knowing my friends, Ven-thie, knowing my friends; and my friends is knowing me, too, O yes!

Nessy (pouring out a cup of tea and cutting another flour cake): Come and see is there a mouth on you, Ffinlo, before I will be clearing the things to go and milk.

Ffinlo: Gur-eh-mie-eu, girl; gur-eh-mie-eu. Aw, it's a good wife you will make one of these days, eh?

Nessy (laughing): There's always some talk of marriage or sweethearts at you, Ffinlo; but you're not married yourself for all. Are you thinking advice is better given than taken?

Ffinlo: Well, thou see girl, some is for getting married and some is not; and I was never very particular either way myself, so it's like that's the way I got left out. I'm thinking if marriage is for thee it's marriage thou'll get, though; and I'm not dead yet, as the saying is.

(Drinks tea and eats. Girls are busy about kitchen. Marget is knitting.)

Marget: Is there anything new at you, Ffinlo?

Ffinlo: No, I don't know that there is. I'm from the tops to-day—just going to the town I am—and the mountains are not the place to be gathering newses, exactly.

Marget: Newses, no. But (looking keenly at him) thou might be gathering plenty else.

Ffinlo (very low, glancing at girls): Whist ya! (Much louder): O, I'm often getting herbs that's good to cure sicknesses on the mountains, yes. There's great virtue in herbs. Luss-y-Chulg, now, and Luss-y-Vill. Aw, good very. Well (turning chair round to fire and lighting pipe), it's good tea thou have got, mistress; and I will be saying Nessy here is as good to bake as you would wish a woman. (Girls take tea-things away and put on sun-bonnets and old jackets.)

Lailey: Well, we'll be getting the milking done now; and maybe when we are finished Ffinlo will give us a tune on the fiddle?

Ffinlo (hastily): Aw yes girl, yes; when thou're done.

(Girls go out, humming a tune and knocking milk-cans together. Pause.)

Marget (drawing her chair closer into the choillagh and speaking confidentially): It's good to be getting a word on yourself alone, Ffinlo man—and it's not often a body will be finding liberty for that, I'm thinking. But thou are a great man for signs and dreams and the like. Tell me, are thou ever hearing talk of ones seeing things these days, and thou travelling the country?

Ffinlo: Well, now thou are asking, mistress! . . . It's not every person I would come over the like to; but it's many a thing I am hearing, and me on the roads and the houses in all the parishes, that a quiet man living in the one place would never hear in a moon of gobbags—and it is certain there are strange things in. . . There's stories in the South and stories in the North; and there's things seen and heard as far off as Rushen and as close as Sulby. Were you hearing Juan Bulgham, him that was thick with the Ben-Varrey, and always making songs about her and about the sea, and made himself a fiddle out of white bones he was getting on the mountains, is

gone, and no person knows where nor how? Drowned, it's like, they're saying; but the body hasn't come in.

Marget: Aye, drowned, maybe—and maybe not. . . I never heard; but there is a piece of a song was made ~~at~~ him one time has been in my head ever since this moon came in. It's certain he knew more about the sea, and was putting more of it into his songs, than any person else I ever heard of, anyway. A quaaagh, lonely man he was, and little among people—but it's saying, They're good to their own; and likely he had better company.

Ffinlo: What's the for you asked had I heard any rumours?

Marget: I was wondering was any person else noticing anything strange about. . . When I am travelling in the dim or in the night, I am seeing lights I don't know all around me, and sometimes a big, shining streak up the glen or down the curragh; and three times when I was coming by the Field of the Battle I was seeing a big shining one, and all like water gone into fire in his clothes and his body; and to-night I was seeing the field and himself all like in thick mist, only I could make out our Illiam standing there in the middle of the wind. And all on a sudden a big gust came, and a sweeping of the mist straight on it, and dragged him away out of sight. And then I was hearing ones laughing and crying all at once in a great tumult and a great stillness, like the sea itself, and then all was gone from me. I didn't like it at all, and Illiam on the water at the time; but the Ramsey priest was just in on his way up to Doran's, and he brought word the "Bonny Mary" is in the bay, and skipper and mate ashore, and Illiam is left in charge aboard; so he must be alive and well for all—yet, anyway. She would hardly go down in the bay, and no weather in.

Ffinlo: No, hardly. And yet—I'm fearing, I'm fearing. It's not every person could be seeing and hearing what thou

were, Marget Teare. But isn't it saying, "Them that's knowing a lot must sorrow a lot"? And that great tumult and laughter—I'm thinking it was a thing like that Juan Bulgham was remembering, the time he made that song about the "Meilyln varrey garraghtey," and like I was hearing myself one time, when I was young before now, and had lost all to my life by the sea. The thing that sent me travelling the roads and the bare tops and around by the white of the tide, with a cry like the wind's noise in my head, giving me no rest, but going, going still. . . O, the sea is hungry, though, and it is giving nothing for nothing. But them that's lost all, and them that will give up all to it, young or old, they're hearing the sweet, long, dreamy cry of it on them day and night; and the lips that are laughing for ever are holding them from remembering anything only the sea itself.

Marget: Well, haven't I lost plenty? Three strong men gone from me. But him that's left is safe enough, this trip anyway, and the boat in the bay lying, and the weather good, and only Douglas to go till he will be leaving her. And maybe after that he will settle ashore, and there will be no more fear on me.

Ffinlo: Maybe, maybe . . . and maybe not. I hope thou are right, though; for thou HAVE lost plenty, it's right. (A clatter of milk-cans outside.) Well, it's like I'd better be tuning Herself here, for I can hear the girls on the street, and they'll be wanting a little dance when they will have the milk siled. (Tunes fiddle. Girls come in with milk-cans.)

Nessy: Tuning up, are you, Ffinlo? That's good; and when this milk is put right at us we'll be shifting the things from the floor, and then it's a right dance we'll have—and partners, too, for there's two seen coming on the Ramsey road, and by the look of them it's Mr MacKneale and Jamsie Cannell of the "Bonny Mary"; and if it's them that's in it's two that are good dancers.

Lailey : And they'll have word of Illiam, too. It's a wonder he's not with them and they coming. Oh, the priest was saying he was left to keep watch on the boat, though. Well, John MacKneale is as good a dancer as you would find any place, and not rotter with pride like some, if he is the skipper of a boat and him only a young man. I'm glad enough to see him coming.

(Marget and Ffinlo exchange furtive glances, unseen by the girls, who bustle about with the cans for a few moments. Enter MacKneale and Cannell, looking very uncomfortable.)

MacKneale : O, good-evening, Mrs Teare.

Marget : Good-evening, Mr MacKneale, I'm glad to see you. I hope you've had a good run this time, and good-luck.

MacKneale (confusedly, looking helplessly at Cannell) : Yes—no—that is, nothing to complain of, up to now.

Cannell : But you cannot be expecting all good and no bad, as the saying is—. (Stops suddenly, and looks at MacKneale.)

Nessy : And you are just here in good time. Ffinlo here is tuning-up, and I was just for clearing the floor, that we could be having a little turn; but it will be far better if we will have right partners, and not jus' us two girls.

Cannell (hastily, looking at MacKneale) : Aw, no—thou mustn't be dancing to-night, girls.

MacKneale (clearing throat nervously) : The fact is, Mrs Teare, we've got strange news for you; bad news, indeed, though we must hope for the best, of course.

Marget : Is it Illiam? Is he dead?—or sick?

MacKneale : It is Illiam indeed; and we don't know is he dead or not, that's the trouble; but he's gone some place. The two of us came ashore this evening for an hour, and when we got back to the boat we found the boy asleep below, and Illiam was not seen; and we haven't got track nor trace of him since. The boy knew nothing

and had heard nothing, and there was only the two of them aboard her. We cannot make the thing out. Illiam is not the man to leave the boat when he was in charge; and I'll never believe he went overboard meaning to take his life; and there wasn't another person near nor another ship in the bay.

Cannell : He was very quiet and dreamy, like, this run; and I was hearing him muttering all sorts of strange things in his sleep; but there was no word of death at him, ever.

Ffinlo : It's not death at all that's on him, but a thing that's far more strange, and a thing there's few finding. But Illiam is not the only one, for there's Juan Bulgham, and a man from the South, and a girl from Sulby, all gone the same way, and no word of one of them, nor ever will be. I tell you I am hearing things and seeing things, and me travelling the length of the land and along the tides; and I know, times there's ones seeing flames and high ones dancing and moving in the deep woods and the far hills, and others hearing voices in the wind; then there's some are going out after the white lips of the sea that are laughing for ever; and they will not be coming back. You'll hear them laughing all over the land when there's ones have followed them and found them; but it's not good to hear, that laughter, for it is waking a cry in your own heart like the strong wind and the tide, and there will be no more rest on you after, like myself. Listen, though! for it's on us this night to be hearing : and hearing is knowing for ever.


All start up, looking towards the door, and outside is heard a distant peal of sardonic laughter, which fades into distant voices singing :—

"Ta deiney treih, treih,

'Sy baatyn goll magh :

Ta ny meillyn varrey garraghtey,

Garraghtey dy-bragh."



THE FAERY TUNE

A PLAY IN ONE ACT, BY MONA DOUGLAS

Characters:

Ewan—A Young Man.

Grandmother—An Old Wise Woman.

Murra—A younger Woman, Ewan's Mother.

Issa—A Young Girl, his Sister.

Scene: A Manx kitchen. The chiollagh is to the left, and near it is a round table set for tea. At the back is a window. Under the window are a long, white-topped table and a form, and at the end of the table nearest the chiollagh is a bink with two water-crooks and a bumper. Above the bink hangs a violin and bow. There is a fairly strong light outside, but within the kitchen it is a little dim. Grandmother is sitting in a low chair by the chiollagh. Murra is cutting bonnag at the round table.

Murra: There! If he finishes that he'll not hurt, I'm thinking. It's time he was seen, though; he's generally done his tea by this time. (Goes over to door and looks out.) Not a sign of him yet at all, and him after the sheep since daylight up the big mountain. Gone chasing after some boghtned or other I suppose he is; he's taken such queer notions these days about hearing things out on the brooghs and all the rest of it. It's far too much up after the sheep by himself the boy is—it's not right for a young person like himself to be out on the mountains all the day, and no person only the dog to be talking to. But what are you to do when he's such a boy-bogh of a one at the ploughing and the fishing and all? We'll look well if themselves get after him, though! (While speaking, she has gone back to the chiollagh, and is stirring the fire.) The kettle is on the boil, but I'll not wet the tea till he's in, for it's hard to say how long will he be yet.

Grandmother: It is certain there are strange things going about these days.

Our Ewan is not the only one that is seeing things, and hearing them, too. Jimmy Look-up was here this morning when you were out feeding—coming up from Ramsa on the road he was, and down the street wanting a piece; so of course I had to bring him in the house and let him have a dhou at the chiollagh—and there was big stories at him. He was saying Harry Bet's ones up the Mullagh-ny-Geay have been seeing lights on the Fairy Hill every night this last month, and the Keolyers that's living down by the old bury-place have been hearing singing in the deep night; and all the dishes going rattling on the shelves, but never a thing out of place when they would be getting up in the morning. And he was saying there was great talk with the Kirk Maughold ones, too, for there's been noises urrov massy going hearing out Ki-one-y-Henin, where them big old stones are. And only last Friday night Thobm-the-Glen was seeing some big white thing like one from outside the world down by the Lhen Rhenny, and the air around him all full of shadows and little whispering noises. Juan Kelly the Dreem is holding to it there is something taking out round Maughold Head, too, for he says he was hearing like some lost thing kyning one night he was coming round in the boat, close in.

Murra: There was talk of that big grey hound going walking on the mountains, too, and the dogs have been howling in the night—but, chut! what would we be thinking on them things for now, with the Chapel just down the road and Olass at us twice in the week?

Grandmother: The Chapel isn't out Kione-y-Henin though, girl, nor up on the mountains either; and there's many a thing might be walking in the night, and us never knowing.

Murra: Shee bannee mee! Such talk as we've got, we might be heathens like they were in the old days! I'm wondering the Lord is putting up with our notions so long, and not taking it out on us some way. 'Tisn't as if we didn't know no better, either, for we've been Christians and had ones preaching to us for long enough. (Listening.) I believe I can hear him coming now, though. I'll be putting the water on the pot; he'll be in directly. (She bends over the fire, making the tea. Ewan comes in, walks over to where the violin hangs, and takes it down.)

Murra (speaking while he is crossing the kitchen): I was thinking you were lost, boy. Were the sheep gone straying that you're so late?

Ewan (sitting down in arm-chair and tuning fiddle): No. The sheep are right enough.

Murra (discovering what he is doing): Bless me! Is that old fiddle at you again? What bother is there on you that you must be scraping on it as soon as you're in the house? Come and get your tea, and leave your tuning till after. Here's a roast herring has been kept hot for you this last hour and more.

Ewan: Just a minute, and I'll come. There's a tune I was hearing to-day—I want to see can I prove it. (Tries to play the Bollan Bane, striking a few notes here and there, but not being able to find the tune.)

Murra (impatiently): Tune! What tune is there at you? You've always got some notion or other. It's a queer thing you must always be hearing and seeing things no person else can. (Ewan goes on playing for a few moments, and then puts violin down on the table impatiently.)

Ewan (coming over to the round table and sitting down): No. I cannot find it now. And I had it right that last time, too!

Murra (pouring out tea): What tune is it, anyway? And where would you be hearing tunes, and you up on the mountains all the day and never a soul near you? (It has grown a little darker. Murra takes a candle in a high brass candlestick from the mantelshelf, crosses over to the dresser, where she lights it, comes back and sets it on the round table, and then goes and sits in the arm-chair. While she is moving about, Grandmother speaks the following words):

Grandmother: There's many a tune up the mountains that you will never be hearing, and many a shadow in the air you will never be seeing, but he will. And maybe it is not only seeing them and hearing them he will be; for there's tunes can drag the heart out of a man like the moon dragging the big tides from the shore, and shadows that will lie over his eyes like the mist on the tops till he will be seeing nothing only themselves in front of him.

Ewan (who has been stirring his tea absently): It was this morning I was up on the big mountain putting a sight on the sheep up there. It was wild terrible, and a little taste of sleet doing in. Three times was I round the mountain after them—you would think there was butcher-agh doing on the creatures—but I got them counted for all, and the number was in. The dog had been running like the wind after them, and when I had them all counted he was that tired he couldn't walk hardly, so I tied his four feet with a sheep-lanket and slung him on my back, and away down the broogh with me. But when I got down to the bog at the head of the river, I heard a noise like music, and I stopped to listen. It was themselves were down in that little sudden gill with the big cairn in it that is going down between Snaefell and the Mullagh Ouyr, carrying on with fiddles and all; and wonderful music at them, too—oh, the tunes dy haaie!

Murra: Did you ever hear the like?

Ewan: There was one tune they had, though, was bothering me tremendous; so I threw the dog on the ground and went over the gill and lay down on the ling,

looking over the side; and then I saw all like ones the colour of moonlight dancing in among the shadows near the struan at the bottom, and the music going on all the time. I couldn't see the ones that were playing at all; up under the tangle of sallies and trammon on the far side of the gill they would be, where it's so dark as the night. It's like it is knocking the tunes out of the noising of the water and the wind in the hills they were, for every time there was a big gust of wind sweeping down the glen the music would be getting louder and wilder, and these ones dancing quicker, and when the wind would be going sobbing away up the hills the tunes would be dying down till they were as soft and slow as the tide slipping out from the shore, and these ones bending and waving like rushes in the wind.

Murra: The dear be good to us! It's lucky he is to get home at all, and him seeing things like that!

Ewan: I stayed there watching them and listening till I had the tune right in my head, and then I hoisted the dog on my back again and made tracks, and the mist chasing me thick down the glen. I got down just under the Carnane where the Tarroo-Ushtey is taking, and I went to see could I sing the tune, but it had all gone from me. Back I went to the gill under the mountain, and there they were just carrying on like before; so I waited till I could sing the tune over with them, and then away down with me again. No use! It had all gone from me again. So away up the glen the second time with me, till I got to the gill, and there they were carrying on just the same as last time. However, said I, I'll be up to you this time! So when I could sing the tune right again, I went down the broogh a piece and stook my fingers tight in my ears that I wouldn't be hearing them, and then I tried till I could raise the tune. When I could get it right that way I made off home the fast I could go, that I could be trying it on my own fiddle; for once I'd find it on that I'd have it for good. And now it has left me again, and I cannot find a note of it hardly; but it's calling in my head for all, and there'll be no rest on me till I will be hearing it again.

Murra: You and your no rest! You may be thinking yourself lucky to get away from them ones and their tunes, without wanting to hear more of them. Come and finish your tea now, and for goodness' sake be looking down fairy gills and places no more. I'm going to see can I lift eyes on Issa. I'm thinking she's gone looking for fairies, too. She ought to be home long before now. (Rises and goes towards door.)

Ewan: Where is she?

Murra (going out): Gone for the calves this hour and more.

(Ewan is sitting looking dreamily into the fire, and there is silence for a moment; then Grandmother speaks suddenly.)

Grandmother: Come here, boy veen, I want to talk to you, but we must be saying it low-like, that there'll no person hear.

Ewan (smiling): Who would be hearing? There isn't a soul in the house but our two selves. (He goes over and kneels by Grandmother's chair, and she leans towards him.)

Grandmother: There's ones outside though, boy; there's ones outside. But listen—is this the tune you were hearing? (Sings the first few bars of the "Bollan Bane" so low as to be almost indistinguishable.)

Ewan (springing up and reaching for violin): That's it, that's it! Go on and sing the rest of it for me, that I'll be able to prove it.

Grandmother (shaking her head): No, no, boy veen, I cannot. That's all I got of it, and it's long years since I got that bit. But the faery tunes.....the faery tunes.....I'm never forgetting them.

Ewan: How were you getting it, grandmother?

Grandmother: Years ago, when I was a young girl, themselves would be after me times. But there was some person putting a charm on me so that I would only be hearing their songs, and their

calling a bit now and a bit in a long time, and never able to follow any of them rightly. But if I would be young like you, hearing that tune, and no charm put on me, oh, I'm thinking there is nothing in this world be holding me.

Ewan (half-startled): Are you meaning—

Grandmother: I'm meaning nothing only what you might be thinking for yourself if you'd a head on you. Hush la! Here's your mother coming.

Murra (coming in at door): Not a sign of the calves yet, and I've been over at the Magher Heer gate looking for them. I can't think what that litcheragh girl is after! The creatures should be put in at us by now. (While she has been speaking, Ewan has gone over to the door and stood looking out. Now he turns and speaks to Grandmother excitedly.)

Ewan: I believe I can hear it out on the tops!

Murra: Hear what?

Ewan: The tune, the faery tune! I'm going to see can I hear it closer to. (He comes back towards the table as though to take up the violin.)

Murra (crossly, and with a note of dread in her voice): You'll do no such thing! Follow fairy tunes, indeed, and your own uncle a class-leader!

Ewan (going towards door carrying violin): I must just go to prove the tune, and then I'll come back.

Murra (fearfully and half-pleading): Its not coming back you'll be if you go tramping off after them things, for they'll get power over you and be keeping you for good, and we'll never be seeing you again. Come and get your tea finished, and don't be bothering about such things. (He half turns, and then goes back towards the door, listening. A note of dread comes into Murra's voice): You're not going, boy. Come back and never mind them.

Ewan (dreamily): I must go, else I'd be getting no rest for hearing the tune in

my dreams, and never able to prove it when I'd be waking. Its not far till I'll be up with them. I can hear them playing from here. (Goes out hurriedly.)

Murra (calling after him): Don't be going! O boy veen, don't be going! You'll never be coming back, I'm telling you! (She has followed him to the door and looks out. Now she turns and comes back to the chio'llagh). He never heard me. O Grannie, he's gone, he's gone! (Pulls her apron over her head, sitting down on a low stool by the chio'llagh, and sways slowly to and fro while speaking the next words.) It's themselves have got him, the Mhiannoo millish.....they've been bothering him this while.....and the good boy he was till he took notions to the fairies and the things! Never running off with the other lads, but always willing to stop and give me a hand with the kiarthags. But its no more we will be seeing him now, only hearing like his voice kyning across the hills in the dim of the summer evenings when the moon will be lifting, or maybe out on the rocks when the big storms will be coming in, or down the glen in the dark night. Ah-treih! Ah-treih!

Grandmother (soothingly): Hush! Don't be fretting that way, Murra, girl. Maybe he'll come back for all. Themselves are not always keeping the ones they are taking away for good. And if he will never be coming again, we must just give in to it, for it is certain it was on him to go this night. Hush, then! See, here's Issa comin in. (Issa comes in, goes over to corner, puts down the stick she has been carrying, looking a little afraid. Murra turns and watches her, but without interest.)

Grandmother (to Issa): What are you seeing, child, that you look so come-over?

Issa: When I was bringing the calves home just now, there was all bright things up the mountains, and I was hearing queer music, and a rushing in the air like a troop of birds flying. Our Ewan was going up towards the mountain playing on his fiddle, and I called to him, but he wouldn't answer. O Granny, what is the meaning of it?

Grandmother: Ewan was hearing a faery tune, and he has gone to see can he prove it.

Murra (speaking at the same time as Grandmother): Your brother is fairy-struck, that's the meaning, and you'll be the same if you go seeing things like that.

Issa (in an awed voice): Its themselves that's in, then?

[Pause.]

I believe I can hear the music again! Maybe it is Ewan has got his tune, and is coming back playing it. (Goes over to door, and stands listening.)

Murra: No, no, child. Never, never.

Issa (excitedly): I can hear a fiddle, though. Come and listen, mother.

Murra (going over and standing beside

Issa at door): He'll never be coming back, never.

Issa: Can't you hear it? Away up the mountain some place. (Both listen for a moment, and the tune Bolla Bane is heard very faintly in the distance, played on a violin.)

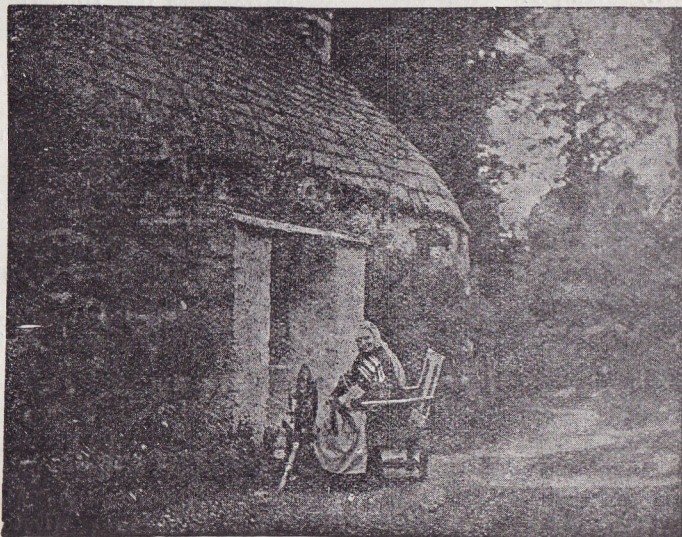
Murra: I can hear the sea noising on the beach, that's all.

Issa: There, there! Can't you hear anything now?

Murra: Only the wind in the glen. No! I believe I do hear something, though. (They listen again and the music becomes louder.)

Issa: It's our Ewan! He's got the tune!

CURTAIN.



YN BLAA SOOREE

(THE COURTING FLOWER).

A MANX SKETCH, BY J. J. KNEEN

CHARACTERS :

Master Keolyah } Who live in the
Mistress Keolyah } Cottage.
Constable Killyah : The Village Constable
Miss Skillicorn : The Village Maiden.
Thom Callister : The Village Cobbler.

Miss Ourphey : The Village Schoolmistress.
Hommy Keoin : The Village Tailor.
Ealish : The Village Gossip.
A Little Boy.

SCENE : A Country Cottage with the gable towards the highroad, and a garden fence around it. A large scarlet flower in full bloom at the gable.

Mr Kewley washing himself at the pump in front of the Cottage.

Mr Kewley : Margit! Where's the towel? (no answer, shouts louder.) Do tha' hear me shoutin' woman? (No answer.) Bless me sowl, the woman is gettin' so dafe it bates all an' everything! (Shouts louder.) Margit! Will tha' bring me the towel, me eyes is full o' soapuds.

Mrs Kewley (comes to the door): Were tha callin', Phil?

Mr Kewley : Aw! Thou're alive still, are tha'? I've been shoutin' till me thrut is clane skint at me!

Mrs Kewley : I navar hard thee.

Mr Kewley : No! Thou navar hears naw-thin', when thou're not wantin' to: I'll bet thou'd hear me quick enough if it was a sovereign I had for thee. Bring me a towel woman, an' don't stan' theer gapin' at me like a phynodderee!

Mrs Kewley (brings him a towel): Thou're the mos' unpatient craythur I ever did see!

Mr Kewley (busy wiping his face, too indignant for words): Ah-h!

Mrs Kewley : Why didn't thou come an' get it theeself? Thou're jus' as able nor I am.

Mr Kewley : Ah! Fiddlesticks! Where do tha get the soap from at all. Rubbishy stuff, the chapest thou can get in Port le Murra, I'll warrant.

Mrs Kewley : Navar min' where I get it from, its good enough for thee! What's the matter with it anyway?

Mr Kewley (rubbing his eyes): What's the matter with it? H'mph! What's not the matter with it?

Mrs Kewley : There's always somethin' doin' on thee!

Mr Kewley : Why don't thou buy proper soap then?

Mrs Kewley : What's the matter with it I axed thee?

Mr Kewley (vigorously rubbing his eyes with the towel): What's the matter with it! I believe thou're buyin' the fieriest soap thou can get in the shop. Me eyes 'll be roomed at thee, that's what they will.

Mrs Kewley : What do tha let the soap get in thee eyes for then?

Mr Kewley (impatiently): Ah!
(Enters house.)

Mrs Kewley: What bogs o' things men are! I declare they're no good for nawthin', except fillin' their prinjaigs.

Mr Kewley (from within): Margit!

Mrs Kewley (to herself): What's the matter now? (Shouting.) Well!

Mr Kewley (from within): Have tha got a collar for me?

Mrs Kewley (to herself): Such a bleih of a man. He can navar fin' anythin'. (She enters the house, and shortly comes out with a pot in her hand.)

Mrs Kewley (resuming): If it had horns it would 'a' pushed him.

Mr Kewley (comes to the door with the collar in his hand): Here's more of thee silly capers! There's such a plaster o' starch on the stud-holes at thee that I can't find them. * * * An' the collar is so stiff it would do for a winda frame. * * * (Shaking the collar at her.) Thou're wantin' to be cughtee with me! Thass war it is! Clane cughtiness!

Mrs Kewley: Phil, bogh! There's always something doin' on thee!

Mr Kewley: Come and get the breakfast ready woman.

Mrs Kewley: The breakfast is ready long ago.

Mr Kewley: Ay, an' I suppose the porridge boiled so thiek that ye can dance a jig on it.

(Mrs Kewley enters the house, and Mr Kewley goes round to the gable of the house, where he sees the flower.)

Mr Kewley: Well, I'm blest! If there isn' a flower on that thing at las'! (Calling his wife.) Margit! Come here!

Mrs Kewley (coming out): Well! What's wrong with thee now?

Mr Kewley: Do tha remember that thing that thee brother Jem brought from South America?

Mrs Kewley: Yis, it'll be about seven years ago.

Mr Kewley: Ay, an' he said it only flowered once in seven years, an' come an' look at it, that black thing like a berry that was on it has bust out into a lovely, big, red flower.

Mrs Kewley (coming up and looking at it): Well, I declare thou're right Phil!

Mr Kewley (goes up to it and smells it): Aw, Margit! There's a lovely smell of it. Iss somehow puttin' me in min' of our young days, when we were sooreein' together yah.

Mrs Kewley: Its mighty lil' sooreein' an' courtin' thou're doin' now Phil. Nawthin' but jo, jo, jo, all the time, an' grumblin' at everything.

Mr Kewley (smells it again): Aw, Margit, just thou smell it. The sweet it is! I navar smelt the lek before!

Mrs Kewley (smells it): Aw, Phil! What a powerful gran' smell, iss makin' me feel young again. (They both smell it again, and Mr Kewley embraces Mrs Kewley.)

Mr Kewley: Aw, Margit! Its puttin' me in a fair comedhar!

Mrs Kewley: Don't be such a thoot Phil! (They smell it again, embrace each other, and enter the house, looking lovingly at each other.)

(Enter Constable Killey.)

Constable Killey (looking very important): I mus' go an' look for the Sergeant. That storm las' night has done awful jeel to the roof. * * * The parson is shoutin' at me about the boys puttin' buttons in the collection boxes, as if I could help it.—Its nawthin' but constable do this, an' constable do that, till I'm druv fair clicky at them.—An' ther's oul' Jemmy Quark's pig that I put in the pinfoul the other day, says Jemmy to me, says he, thou might have brought the pig home instead o' stickin' it in yander. The imprance o' the man fair knocked me squew-whiff.

Thought I had nothin' else to do but trot all the way up to Ronague with his blessed owl' pig. I'll watch it. For two pins I'd summon him for not havin' a ring in the pig's snout.—They've got a fine hafter of a cook down at Kentraugh yandher now. I'm thinkin' I mus' be puttin' a lil' sight on her. (Rubbing his coat-sleeve on his mouth reminiscently.) There's a good drop o' jough at yandher ones. Brewed in Castletown they're tellin' me, an' there's nawthin' like home-made stuff, it can't be bate. The las' cook in Kentraugh was mighty good for givin' me a lil' drop, an' them lil' pies an' tarts she'd be makin' for me sometimes! (Sighs deeply.) Its makin' me mouth fair water when I'm thinkin' of them. (He sees the flower.) My song, whatever kin' of a flower is that at all? Iss redder nor cul' Tommy Kinvig's nose, an' thass middlin'. Whatever is it at all? (Smells it.) Ah! (Sighs deeply.) Thass what I calls a gran' smell now! (Smells it again.) A-a-ah! (Sits down with dreamy eyes.) A a-a-ah!

(Enter Miss Skillicorn, who is rather surprised at seeing the constable in such an undignified attitude.)

Miss Skillicorn: Good evening, Mr Killey!

Constable Killey: Good everin' to ye, me dear!

Miss Skillicorn (greatly surprised, aside): Oh! I do believe he's—no, surely, it can't be so! (To the constable, holding her pince-nez up to her eyes.) Are you unwell, Constable Killey?

Constable Killey: Navar felt bether in me life dear! - (Sighs contentedly.)

Miss Skillicorn (aside): Whatever can be the matter with him!

Constable Killey: I'm feelin' so happy! I'm quite young again, me dear!

Miss Skillicorn (aside): This is terrible! What will I do? (To the constable.) Are you sure you're all right, Constable?

Constable Killey: I feel full o' something, Miss Skillicorn, an' I'm hardly knowin'

what it is. I'm clane intoxicated with it.

Miss Skillicorn (aside): Ah! Poor fellow! Just what I feared!

Constable Killey: Miss Skillicorn!

Miss Skillicorn: Yes, Mr Killey!

Constable Killey: Were ye avar in luv'?

Miss Skillicorn (shocked): Constable, I am surprised at you! (Looks severely at him through her pince-nez.)

Constable Killey: Have you navar felt that tendher passion that takes houl' of your whole body?

Miss Skillicorn (ignoring his question): I want you to stand at the school house door and keep the boys from making a noise, we are having a tea-party and concert to-night.

Constable Killey: Miss Skillicorn! I am surprised that ye should mention such a triflin' matter, an' me speakin' of such an important matter! I axed ye were ye avar in luv' Did ye navar feel that tendher flame that burns the whole sowl out o' ye?

Miss Skillicorn (stiffly): I'd prefer not to discuss it.

Constable Killey: H'm, hoity-toity! Are ye seein' that luv'ly flower there, Miss Skillicorn?

Miss Skillicorn: Yes, I do.

Constable Killey (rises and claps his chest): Take a good strong snuff of it, and be made young again lek me.

Miss Skillicorn (looking at the flower): It's rather pretty.

Constable Killey: Prity! Me dear Miss Skillicorn, it's more than prity; its—its—its—

Miss Skillicorn: Gorgeous!

Constable Killey: Yis, ye've hit it to a T.

Miss Skillicorn (smelling it): It does smell sweet, doesn't it? (Sighs.)

Constable Killey (smells it again): Ah! Miss Skillicorn! Of all the smells I avar smelt, I navar smelt a smell lek that smell before!

Miss Skillicorn (smells it again): It's a delicious smell.

Constable Killey: Do ye know, Miss Skillicorn, I'm feelin' very lonely sometimes.

Miss Skillicorn (coyly): Are you?

Constable Killey: Yis, I am, I'm thinkin' I should have a wife to look after me.

Miss Skillicorn: Perhaps you should.

Constable Killey (putting an arm round her waist): Would ye lek to be that wife, dear?

Miss Skillicorn: Oh, Mr Killey, this is so sudden!

Constable Killey (takes her in his arms): You'll be me wife, won't ye, Jinny?

Miss Skillicorn: Why, of course, if you wish it, Mr Killey.

Constable Killey: Don't call me Mr Killey, call me James.

Miss Skillicorn (lovingly): James! (They embrace each other, and retire arm in arm, sighing contentedly.)

(Enter Ealish.)

Ealish: The constable an' herself are lukin' very cushagh. The imprint hussy had actu'ly her arm roun' his nek, an' her bitendin' to be so modes', an' all the res' o' it. Well, well! I wuldn't trus' these modes' ones as far as I culd heave them. They're as deep as the say. Ay, ay, still waters is runnin' deep. H'm. 'Deed on Miss Skillicorn, though!

(Mr Kewley comes out.)

Ealish: Morra, Masther Keolyah, iss doin' a brave mornin'.

Mr Kewley: Yis, Ealish, iss a nice mornin' this is.

Ealish: Iss lek thou'll be thinnin' the turmits soon?

Mr Kewley: Yis, yis, Ealish, the turmits are comin' on nice.

Ealish: It blew terble hard on the night, didn't it?

Mr Kewley: Aw, hard enough, Ealish; it was fit to lif' the thatch of the house.

Ealish: Thou're lookin' very gennal this mornin', Masther Keolyah?

Mr Kewley: Yis, cree, I'm feelin' morthal happy.

Ealish: Hard from thee brother Ned, out in 'stralia, maybe?

Mr Kewley: No, yah. I haven't hard from Ned for ages.

Ealish: H'm! An' how is the misthress?

Mr Kewley: Aw, middlin', yah, middlin'.

Ealish: H'm! Well, well, I mus' be goin' though.

Mr Kewley: What driss is theere on thee yah, arn tha' puttin' a sight on herself?

Ealish: No, I mus'n't hindher. I left the broth on the fire, an' I axed that chile o' me sesthar's to keep an eye on it for me. But I navar saw such a bleih of a thing, she's the mos' uselesses' craythur I aver seen. Northin' but drammin' of the bhoys all the time, an' its pity help the poor man that'll get her, thass what I says. I navar saw or hard the lek, the gels in these days bates Mollaghan, an' they're sayin' that he bate the oul' falla himself.

Mr Kewley: Have tha' seen our flower, Ealish?

Ealish: What flower, Masther Keolyah?

Mr Kewley (pointing to it): Theere it is, Ealish.

Ealish: Aw! An' its a lovely colour, Masther Keolyah. Iss jus' lek the dress that the parson's wife have got.

Mr Kewley: Ay, an' the smell is far more lovelier.

Ealish: Indeed, though!

Mr Kewley: Aw yiss, Ealish, thou navar smelt the lek at all.

Ealish: (smells it) Iss nice though.

Mr Kewley: Isn't it?

Ealish: (smells it again) Iss a powerful gran' smell to be sure.

Mr Kewley: (smelling it) Its wondherful Ealish. . . Thou're a middlin' good-lookin' woman for all Ealish, iss a wondher thou navar got marrit!

Ealish (looking coyly at him): An' iss good-lookin' thou are theeself, Masther Keolyah.

Mr Kewley (puts his arm round her waist): There's a wais' at thee as slendher as a wasp, Ealish.

Ealish (trying to disengage herself): None o' thee imprance, Masther Keolyah. How dar' tha, an' a wife at thee too!

(Mrs Kewley comes to the door, and catches them.)

Mrs Kewley: Phil!

Mr Kewley (suddenly taking away his arm, and assuming an innocent air): Yis, Margit!

Mrs Kewley (severely): What are thou doin'.

Mr Kewley: Jus' feelin' Ealish's heart, Margit. She's thinkin' she's got affection of the heart.

Mrs Kewley: Yiss, an' she looks it, the imprant slut. How dar' tha be makin' love to other women behin' me back, answer me that, Phil?

Ealish: Iss true what he's sayin' Misthress Keolyah, I have an affection of the heart.

Mrs Kewley: Be off home with thee, thou slut!

(Ealish struts off, with her arm a-kimbo and her nose in the air.)

Mrs Kewley (sternly): Phil!

Mr Kewley (meekly): Yis, cree.

Mrs Kewley: Get in the house.

(Mr Kewley enters house crestfallen.)

Mrs Kewley (resuming): I mus' keep an eye on him.—The imprance o' that hussy—an' she can't get a man of her own.

(Enter Thom Callister.)

Thom: Hullo, Misthress Keolyah, an' how are tha' at all? Thou're a lil bit groomagh! Has somebody been puttin' on thee?

Mrs Kewley: The carryin's on o' some people is fit to make anybody groomagh.

Thom: Ogh! Misthress Keolyah! Ogh, yah! An' who's been doin' it on thee then?

Mrs Kewley: Aw, navar min', Thom, iss no matther. Let bygones be bygones, as the man said before now.

Thom: Well, well, yah, I don't want to pry into thee affairs at all. (He sees the flower). Thou're got a nice flower here, Misthress Keolyah!

Mrs Kewley: Yis, isn't it, an' there's a mortal gran' smell of it.

Thom (smells it): An' there's a lovely altogether smell of it, Misthress Keolyah. (Smelling it again). Iss puttin' me in min' of the times I'd be havin' with the gels before now.

Mrs Kewley: Thou were after Jinny Cotcher one time, Thom. Didn't she get married to a falla from Laxa.

Thom (wiping away an imaginary tear): Ay, she nearly broke me heart.

Mrs Kewley (smelling it): O Thom.

Thom (smelling it): O Margit!

(Mrs Kewley falls into Thom's arms, and Mr Kewley comes to the door.)

Mr Kewley: Margit!
(They hastily disengage.)

Mrs Kewley: Yis, Phil!

Mr Kewley: What's the meanin' o' this I'd lek to know.

Thom: The poor woman swowned in me arms, Masther Keolyah.

Mr Kewley: Well, she had no right to swown in thy arms, Thom Callister.

Mrs Kewley: I might have been hurted bad only for Thom.

Mr Kewley: H'm! Do tha think I'm a gor to believe that tale? Thou'd better come in the house, an' don't thee be comin' roun' affther other men's wives, Thom Callister.

(Mr and Mrs Kewley enter house.)

Thom (to himself): I'm thinkin' thou'll be gettin' theeself into trouble, Thom Callister, if thou're not carful. (Enter Ealish.) Hullo, Ealish! How is thee heart, gel?

Ealish: All right, Thom; how is thine?

Thom: Aw, I don't know, I'm sure. I used to be thinkin' theree wasn't a scorrickeen of a heart left at me, but it seems I have a lil bit o' one afther all.

Ealish: How did tha fin' out, Thom? Have thou been havin' a sniff o' Keolyah's flower too?

Thom: Yis, theree's a powerful smell of it.

Ealish: Gran' joarree lah! (Goes and smells it.) Is'n it sweet though?

Thom (smelling it): I navar smelt the lek at all.

Ealish: Thou mus' be lonesome lek livin' in that big house by theeself, Thom Callister (sidling up to him.)

Thom: Lonesome thou're sayin', Ealish. 'Deed an' it's meself that is lonesome at t'imes. Aw, lonesome enough, eree.

Ealish: Its a wondher thou're not gettin' a woman in the house, Callister.

Thom: A woman thou're sayin'. An' who'd be havin' a cobbler for a man I'd lek to know?

Ealish: 'Deed an' they might do a great dale wuss nor that.

Thom: Thou navar got a man theeself Ealish.

Ealish (sighing): No navar Thom.

Thom: How's that yah?

Ealish: Aw, no man navar axed me.

Thom: An' thou're a skeogh birrov a woman too.

Ealish: Well, I was once, Thom.

Thom: An' thou're not lookin' bad yet.

Ealish (looking coy): It's paddyin' me thou are now, Thom.

Thom: Not at all yah. Its the rale truth. (Tipping her under the chin.) Look here, Ealish, how would thou lek to live in that big house with me?

Ealish (pretending to be annoyed): Callister! What are tha manin' at all?

Thom: Well, well, Ealish, an' I'm afraid its meself that's a bough at sooreein'. Thou see I'm not understandin' the women very much. But what would thou say if I axed thee to marry me now?

Ealish (she leans her head on his shoulder, and he puts his arm around her): O Thom!

Thom (looking worried, aside): Theree's jeel done at me now anyway.

Ealish (taking him by the arm): Let's go an' get the licence, Thom bhoy.

Thom: Hou! 'on' yah, hou! 'on; let me think. Now, look here, Ealish, I only axed thee how would thou lek to marry me?

Ealish: Thom Callister. (Angrily.) I'm ashamed o' thee. Is it tryin' to make a gamman of a poor lone woman thou are. Thou've axed me to marry thee, an' thou'll have to bide by thee word, or I'll take thee up for brache o' promise.

Thom (aside); Jee bannee mee! (To Ealsh.) What did thou say, Ealish?

Ealish: I said I'd take thee up for brache o' promise.

Thom: Mercy on us! What's that at all, Ealish? I'm hopin' its nawthin' bad anyway.

Ealish: If thou had the schoolin' I had, Thom Callister, thou'd know what brache o' promise was. Don't thou navar read the newspaper?

Thom: No navar. Do thou, Ealish?

Ealish: To be sure I do.

Thom: An' where did thou get the gran' schoolin' from at all?

Ealish: Navar min'. Let's go on' get that licence. (She leads him out by the arm. He looks like a condemned criminal.)

(Enter Miss Curphey.)

Miss Curphey: Dear me, I feel so distracted with those children. They worry me.—Jem Killey and Miss Skillicorn seem very intimate (sniffing.) Actually walking arm in arm.—So wrapped up in each other that they took no notice of me.—(Reminiscently) Mr Killey used to be so different before, I can't understand it. That hussy has got him collogued someway.

(Enter Constable Killey.)

Constable Killey: Ah, good morning, Miss Curphey. And how are you this morning?

Miss Curphey (coldly): Very well, thank you.

Constable Killey: Isn't it a delightful morning, Miss Curphey?

Miss Curphey (stiffly): A very nice morning, Mr Killey.

Constable Killey: Have you seen this wonderful flower, Miss Curphey? (He points to it, and goes and smells it.) It has such a lingering perfume. (Sighs deeply.) Smell it, Miss Curphey.

Miss Curphey (inhales it): It is very sweet (Sighing deeply.)

Constable Killey: Isn't it? Ah, Miss Curphey, what memories of golden youth and wasted opportunities its fragrance brings to one's memory. (He smells it again.) It makes a chap feel quite young again.

Miss Curphey (inhales it again, sighs): Its a glorious perfume!

Constable Killey: You're a remarkable good-looking young woman, Miss Curphey?

Miss Curphey (sternly): How dare you, sir!

Constable Killey: Don't be angry at me, Miss Curphey. There's no harm in admiring a nice young lady surely.

Miss Curphey: No man should admire more than one lady.

Constable Killey: Well, all our natures are not alike Miss Curphey. You know what the song says—"I love 'em all, or twenty such; grey eyes, or brown, or black."

Miss Curphey: Constable, I'm astonished at you. Really I am! What would Miss Skillicorn say if she heard you speak like that.

Constable Killey: Miss Skillicorn! Ah! I forgot who you meant for a moment. Miss Skillicorn is a very nice young lady. But, pardon me for saying it, Miss Curphey, you are the prettier of the two.

Miss Curphey: But are not you and Miss Skillicorn engaged to be married?

Constable Killey: Engaged to be married! Let me see. Dear me. How forgetful I am! Married, you said, Miss Curphey? No, I was never so lucky. But I'm only young yet. And I may marry, yes, I may marry, Miss Curphey.

Miss Curphey: You'll marry Miss Skillicorn, of course.

Constable Killey: I'm not so sure about that. D'ye know, Miss Curphey, I had a liking for you before Miss Skillicorn came here.

Miss Curphey (coily): Had you?

Constable Killey: Yes, I had. And I'm thinking that liking is beginning to come to a head.

Miss Curphey (teasingly): You shouldn't speak like that, Mr Killey. What would Miss Skillicorn say?

Constable Killey: Hang Miss Skillicorn!

Miss Curphey: Oh, Mr Killey. I am surprised at you.

Constable Killey: I'm sorry, Miss Curphey, but don't be harpin' about Miss Skillicorn all the time. (Putting his arm round her waist.) It's you I want, and not Miss Skillicorn.

(Enter Miss Skillicorn.)

Miss Skillicorn (freezingly): James!

Constable Killey (hastily disengaging his arm): Jinny!

Miss Skillicorn: How dare you?

Constable Killey: I'm sorry, dear.

Miss Curphey: By what rights do you ask such a question, Miss Skillicorn? Surely Mr Killey can do what he pleases.

Miss Skillicorn: Do what he pleases! I'll let you see that, you brazen-faced hussy! Do ye know that we're engaged?

Miss Curphey: Engaged! Is that true, Mr Killey?

Constable Killey (meekly): I don't know, I'm sure.

Miss Skillicorn (shrilly): You don't know, you wretch! (Shaking her umbrella at him.) How dare you?

Constable Killey (looking helplessly from one to the other): D-d-don't hit me, M-m-miss Sk-skillicorn!

Miss Curphey: You are a double-faced wretch.

Miss Skillicorn: Yes, an inhuman monster, making love to two women at the same time.

Constable Killey: Don't blame me, ladies. It was the flower.

Miss Curphey: Ay, that's just like a man. Put the blame on something or somebody else.

Miss Skillicorn: Yes, like the first man did.

Miss Curphey: A good thrashing would do you good.

Miss Skillicorn: Why not give him one? (Hitting him with the umbrella.) Take that! You trouse!

Miss Curphey: And that! (Hitting him with her umbrella.)

Constable Killey: Houl' on, women, houl' on.

(After thrashing him well, they at length desist.)

Miss Skillicorn: There now, that ought to be a lesson for you not to trifle with ladies' affections again.

Miss Curphey: Yes, and I hope you feel ashamed of yourself. (Exeunt ladies.)

Constable Killey: Shee bannee mee! I'm glad I'm a bachelor for all. (Feeling the tender spots where he was thrashed.) —Wasn't I a bleb to allow meself to be carried away by such nonsense.—No, James Killey, thou're not a ladies' man at all, an' navar, will be. (Exit.)

(Enter Hommy Kewin.)

Hommy: I suppose I'd batther put a sight on oul' Keolyah. He'll be wantin' to know have I got that new shuit ready for him.

(Enter Ealish.)

Ealish: Morra, Hommy!

Hommy: Morra to theeself, Ealish!

Ealish: Thou're lookin' stout terrble this mornin', Hommy?

Hommy: Well, I'm feelin' middlin' yah.

Ealish: There's no use o' complainin', Hommy.

Hommy: Norra bit yah.

Ealish: Did thou see Keolyah's flower here (pointing to it).

Hommy: Aw, I hates red, Ealish. Its lek showing a red rag to a bull.

Ealish: Well, jus' thee smell it them.

Hommy: 'Deed an' I won't though.

Ealish (inhaling it): I'd navar be tired smellin' it.

(Enter Miss Curphey and Miss Skillicorn.)

Miss Curphey: Good morning, Mr Kewin.
Good morning, Ealish.

Hommy and Ealish: Good mornin'.

Hommy: Its doin' a brave mornin', ladies?

Miss Skillicorn: Yes, quite a Spring day.

Miss Curphey: It is indeed.

(All the ladies, one after the other, smell the flower.)

Hommy: The women are fond of the flowers.

Ealish: But this is an extra special flower.

(All the ladies sigh deeply.)

Miss Curphey: How sweet!

Miss Skillicorn: Charming!

Ealish (seizing Hommy by the arm):
Come on Hommy, let's have a lil strowl.

Hommy: Hou! on yah. I mus' put a sight on Keolyah's ones.

Ealish: Navar min' Keolyah's ones, come on with me!

Miss Skillicorn (Taking his other arm):
He's coming with me, Ealish.

Miss Curphey (pulling him by the coat):
Come with me, Hommy!

Hommy: Hou! on! Hou! on! Are ye all gone kei? Ye'll have me pulled clane asundher. (Wrenches himself free, runs off, the ladies give chase.)

(Enter from one side Thom Callister, from the other, Constable Killey.)

Constable Killey: Hallo! Thom bhoys.

Thom: Hallo! Mr Killey!

Constable Killey: What's new at thee?

Thom: There's not much newsses goin'.

Constable Killey: They're tellin' me thou're courtin' hard, Thom.

Thom: 'Deed. An' I hard the same about theeself.

Constable Killey: What did thou hear?

Thom: Navar min'.

Constable Killey: Don't thou believe all thou hear.

Thom: An' don't thou naythar.

Constable Killey: I hear theeself an' Ealish are goin' off soon.

Thom: She tried to collogue me into marryin' her, but I wasn' havin' nawthin'.

Constable Killey: I suppose thou bruk the poor woman's heart.

Thom: Its mighty lil heart thass at yondher craythur. I hear thou got an awful bathagin' this mornin'?

Constable Killey (looking indignant): It would take a mighty good one to give me a latherin', I can tell thee.

Thom: Well, well, maybe lah! I'm only tellin' thee what I hard. An' I'm not sayin' whether I believe it or no.

Constable Killey: If thou believe all thou'll hear, thou'll eat all thou see.

Thom: This is a nice flower o' Keolyah's?

Constable Killey: Yes, it is though; I can't help smellin' it. (Inhales it.)

Thom (smelling it): Is'n' it strong? It makes a falla feel quite dramy.

(Enter Hommy hurriedly, hatless, speechless, and clothes all awry.)

Hommy: Help me, bhoys, help me! For goodness sake.

Constable Killey: What's wrong with thee? (Holding him by the scruff of the coat.) Steady theeself, man!

Hommy: They're afther me.

Thom: Who's afther thee?

Hommy: The women.

Constable Killey: What women?

Hommy: Ealish, Miss Skil——

Constable Killey: Oh, law! I'm off bhoys! (Exit hurriedly.)

Thom: So am I! (Exit.)

(Exit Hommy hurriedly, enter Miss Skillicorn, Miss Curphey, and Ealish, excitedly.)

Ealish: This way women! (Pointing out the way Hommy has gone.) This way.

Miss Skillicorn (superciliously): Who are you that you should lead us?

Miss Curphey: Yes, say so indeed!

Ealish: Who am I? Oh, so ye're thinkin' yerselves a step above buttermilk are ye?

Miss Skillicorn: We don't know what you mean.

Miss Curphey: I'm sure I don't.

Ealish: Don't know what I mean, eh? Well, let me tell ye this, that I have more claim to Hommy than you ones.

Miss Skillicorn: Pray, how is that?

Miss Curphey: Let us leave this ignorant person.

Ealish (curtseying): Don't worry, ladies! I've had enough o' ye. I'm goin' to look for Hommy. (Exit.)

Miss Curphey: Such an intolerable person!

Miss Skillicorn: She is indeed. (Looking round.) Why we're back at Kewley's house, and there's the flower again.

Miss Curphey: So it is. (They go and inhale it.)

Miss Skillicorn: Isn't it sweet?

Miss Curphey: Delicious!

Miss Skillicorn: Which way did Mr Kewin go?

Miss Curphey (pointing): This way.

Miss Skillicorn: Well, I'm off to look for him. (Moving in direction.)

Miss Curphey: And what about me?

Miss Skillicorn: Go and find another.

Miss Curphey: Find another indeed! That's your game, is it?

(Miss Curphey goes and pulls Miss Skillicorn back by the skirt, and they begin to thrash each other with their umbrellas)

(Mr Kewley comes to the door.)

Mr Kewley: Hou! on, women, hou! on, ye'll have each other kilt. What in the world are ye fightin' about at all?

Miss Skillicorn: Miss Curphey started it.

Miss Curphey: No, indeed, it was you.

Mr Kewley: Aw, well, ye'd batter get home, an' not be teasin' at each other like a pair o' she cats.

(Miss Skillicorn and Miss Curphey exeunt shamefacedly.)

Mr Kewley: What in the world came over the women at all? (Enters house.)

(A little boy comes along, spies the flower, looks about to see if there is anyone looking, plucks it, puts it inside of his cap, and walks off.)

Mr Kewley (comes out to look at the flower, and finds it gone): Aw, well, if somebody has'n gone an tuk the flower. (Calling.) Margit!

Mrs Kewley: Yes, dear!

Mr Kewley: The flower is gone.

Mrs Kewley: Yis, creë, clane gone.

Mr Kewley: Aw, well, I'm sorry for that. An it'll be seven years more before another comes on it.

Mr Kewley: I'm afraid we won't be here then, creë.

Mrs Kewley: Maybe yes, an' maybe no. Iss hard to tell.

Mr Kewley: Well, it was jus' theere long enough to let me know that theere was'n a woman in the whole world like me own Margit. (Puts his arm around her.)

Mrs Kewley: An' thou'll navar jo me again, Phil?

Mr Kewley: Navar again, Margit!

Mrs Kewley: Aw, well, we navar knew how much we loved each other until the blaa-sooree towl us.

[The end.]



